

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 7-9 and 12-20 are presently pending in this case. Claims 1-6 and 10-11 are canceled, and Claims 7-9 and 12-14 are amended, and new Claims 15-20 are added by the present amendment. Amended Claims 7-9 and 12-14 and new Claims 15-20 are supported by the original claims and specification.¹ Amended Claims 7-9 and 12-14 and new Claims 15-20 add no new matter.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Hamada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,462). However, Claims 4-14 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but otherwise were indicated as including allowable subject matter if re-written in independent form to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claims 4-14 include allowable subject matter.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite, Claims 1-3 have been canceled, making the rejection moot with respect to these claims. Further, new Claims 15-20 positively recite method steps or apparatus elements. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 7-9 and 12-20 are in full compliance with all requirements under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Hamada, Claims 1-3 have been canceled, making this rejection moot.

¹See e.g. Specification from page 7, line 11 to page 9, line 6.

New Claims 15, 16, and 17 contain the subject matter of original Claim 10, which was indicated as containing patentable subject matter. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claims 15-17 are patentable.

New Claims 18, 19, and 20 contain the subject matter of original Claim 4, which was indicated as containing patentable subject matter. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claims 18-20 are patentable.

Claims 7-9 and 12-14 are amended to depend from new Claims 15-20, which are believed to be patentable. Accordingly, Claims 7-9 and 12-14 are also believed to be patentable.

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000

Fax: (703) 413 -2220

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